

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 6730

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SUBJ: CIVIL LIBERTIES

SUMMARY: GOE INSPIRED ACTION AGAINST A PROMINENT RIGHTIST AND A PROMINENT LEFTIST ARE REGARDED LOCALLY AS ILLIBERAL AND UNNECESSARY. RIGHTISTS PRESS NOW INSISTING LEGAL ACTION BE TAKEN AGAINST HAYKAL IN WAKE HIS ATTACK ON SADAT ON EVE US VISIT AND SADAT'S SUBSEQUENT PUBLIC DENUNCIATION OF HIM IN BONN. SADAT, HOWEVER, IS PRESUMABLY ACUTELY AWARE THAT PUBLIC TRAIL OF HAYKAL WOULD PROVIDE HIM LOCAL FORUM HE NOW LACKS AND COULD FOCUS INTERNATIONAL ATTENTION ON FACT THAT JAN RIOTS HAVE SET BACK SADAT'S PLANS FOR FURTHER POLITICAL LIBERALIZATION. END SUMMARY

1. EGYPTIAN LIBERALS (I.E., INTELLECTUALS ON LEFT AND RIGHT WHO FAVOR RAPID POLITICAL LIBERALIZATION) ARE CURRENTLY CONCERNED ABOUT THREE ISSUES: (A) SUCCESSFUL GOE EFFORT KEEP RIGHTIST OOPONENT OF SADAT OUT OF PEPLES ASSEMBLY; (B) DECISION REMOVE LEADING MARXIST INTELLECTUAL FROM PRESS; (C) THAT THESE ARE STRAWS IN WIND PRESAGING VIGOROUS ACTION AGAINST OTHER LEFTIST JOURNALISTS AND/OR SADAT'S CHIEF NASSERIST OPPONENT, EX-AHRAM EDITOR HAYKAL.

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2. FATE OF KAMAL AL-DIN HASAYN. ON FEB 14 ASSEMBLY EXPELLED FORMER RCC MEMBER AND IKHWAN SYMPATHIZER HUSAYN, WHOSE VIOLENT CRITICUSM SADAT'S FEB 3 LAW AND ORDER DECREE WAS JUDGED "INCOMPATIBLE WITH PARLIAMENTARY BEHAVIOR" (CAIRO 2695). HUSAYN IMMEDIATELY DECLARED HE WOULD PRESENT HIMSELF AS CANDIDATE IN BENHA BI-ELECTION AND WENT TO COURT TO PROTEST CONSTITUTIONAL BASIS HIS EXPULSION WHEN HE WON HIS CASE,

SERIES OF EVENTS ENSUED WHICH HAS WORRIED LIBERAL ESTABLISHMENT. FIRST, SUPREME CONSITTUTIONAL COURT SUSPENDED FORMER RULING IN FAVOR HUSAYN BY AN ADMINISTRATIVE COURT. THEN, MINISTRIES OF JUSTICE AND INTERIOR ASKED CONSTITUTIONAL COURT TO "OVERRULE" ADMINISTRATIVE COURT. LOCAL BENHA COURT INDEPENDENTLY ORDERED HUSAYN'S NAME BE STRICKEN FROM CANDIDATE LIST. MEANWHILE, PEOPLES ASSEMBLY RUSHED THROUGH AMENDMENT TO BASIC ASSEMBLY MEMBERSHIP LAW 39 OF 1973, SPECIFYING EXPELLED MEMBERS MAY NOT RUN IN SUBSEQUENT BI-ELECTIONS; AMENDMENT WAS RETROACTIVE TO BEGINNING CURRENT SESSION (OCT 76) TO MAKE IT APPLICABLE IN HUSAYN CASE. UPSHOT WAS THAT HUSAYN UNABLE RUN IN BENHA BI-ELECTION APRIL 19 (DATE WAS TWICE POSTPONED BY MININT).

3. LUTFI AL-KHULI. FIRING OF MARXIST INTELLECTUAL LAST MONTH FROM EDITORSHIP OF AL-TALI'A AND CONVERSION THAT MONTHLY FROM ORGAN OF LEFTIST INTELLECTUALS INTO MAGAZINE FOR "SCIENCE AND YOUTH" (CAIRO 4123) CONTINUES MAJOR TOPIC CONVERSATION HERE. LUTFI IS ONE OF SYMBOLS OF PRO-SOVIET COMMUNISM, AND AS SUCH REGARDED BY SADAT AS ENEMY OF THE REPUBLIC. NEVERTHELESS, HE IS ONE OF LOCAL MARXSITS WHO, LIKE ABD AL-SATTAR TAWILA, HAS AN OCCASION ESTABLISHED WORKING RELATIONSHIP WITH SADAT. MORE TO THE POINT, TAL'I'A (UNLIKE LIKEMINDED WEEKLY ROSE AL-YUSUF), ENJOYED LIMITED CIRCULATION, SINCE ITS COMMENTARIES AND ARTICLES WERE PITCHED TO AN INTELLECTUAL, NOT A MASS, AUDIENCE.

4. PREDICTABLY, LUFTI HAS BEEN AIRING HIS COMPLAINTS IN EUROPEAN PRESS, E.G., HE TOLD LE MATIN DE PARIS ON APRIL 13
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THAT SADAT "GOVERNS SOLELY IN INTERESTS OF PARASITIC BOURGEOUSIE," I.E. THAT "THE 10 PERCENT OF EGYPTIANS WHO CONSUME 45 PERCENT OF PRODUCTION", AND IGNORES THE OTHER 90 PERCENT. HE ALSO CHARGED US AID BENEFITS ONLY THIS MINORITY, UNLIKE SOVIET ASSISTANCE WHICH BUILT ASWAN DAM (AFP). SADAT HAD TO FIELD POINTED QUESTION IN PARIS FROM ERIC ROULEAU OF LE MONDE ON THIS SUBJECT. IN SUM, SADAT IS SEEN LOCALLY TO HAVE UNNECESSARILY AND ILL JUDGEDLY PROVIDED LEGITIMATE FODDER FOR CRITICS WHO DENY HIS CONSTANT ASSERTION THAT EGYPTIAN PRESS IS "FREE".

4. WHAT NEXT? RUMORS ABOUND THAT ROSE AL-YUSUF STAFF WILL BE NEXT TO UNDERGO SHAKE UP. EDITOR IN CHIEF SHARQAWI "RESIGNED" FOR "HEALTH REASONS" LAST WEEK. IN MEANTIME, NEW LAW ON PRESS ORGANIZATION IS BEING DRAFTED UNDER SUPERVISION ASU HEAD KHALIL. HOWEVER, THIS MAY TURN OUT, LEFTIST JOURNALISTS UNLIKELY BE REHABILITATED. NEVERHELESS, INVESTIGATIVE REPORTING BY MUCKRACKING JOURNALISTS ON DOMESITIC SCANDALS CONTINUES APACE.

5. THE QUESTION OF HAYKAL. AS USUAL, SHADOW OF HAYKAL, SELF-APPOINTED NASSERIST INTERPRETER, LOOMS LARGE ON DOMESTIC SCENE. FURY WITH WHICH SADAT LIT INTO HIM IN BONN (IN REACTION TO HAYKAL'S ACID CRITICISM OF SADAT ON EVE OF HIS DEPARTURE FOR US--CAIRO 5618) PALES NEXT TO STRIDENCY OF SUBSEQUENT DEMAND BY LOCAL PRESS THAT HE BE PLACED ON TRAIL FOR OPERATING (AT NASSER'S BEHEST) AS A "CIA AGENT." FULL PAGE IN AKHBAR APRIL 9, FOR EXAMPLE, INSISTED PUBLIC PROSECUTOR ACT, THOUGH ONE COLUMNIST SENSIBLY POINTED OUT THAT HAYKAL WOULD PROBABLY LIKE NOTHING BETTER THAN "MARTYHOOD" AND PUBLIC FORUM OF A PUBLIC TRAIL. HOWEVER, AS RUMOSR OF POSSIBLE PUNITIVE ACTION SWIRL ABOUT HIM, HAYKAL CONTINUES EXPLAIN TO HIS DISTINGUISHED EGYPTIAN AND FOREIGN VISITORS HOW WRONG SADAT'S FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC POLICIES ARE PROVING TO BE.

6. COMMENT: SADAT'S IMAGE AS CAUTIOUS BUT DETERMINED DEMOCRAT
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WAS HURT BY STIFF LAW AND ORDER DECREE INSTITUTED AFTER JAN RIOTS. HUSAYN AND AL-KHULI EPISODES, PLUS CONTINUED MUZZLING OF LEFTIST JOURNALISM, HAVE AGGRAVATED LIBERAL RESENTMENT. ACTION AGAINST HAYKAL WOULD PROVOKE GRAVE RESENTMENT IN LIBERAL CIRCLES, THOUGH MOST EGYPTIANS DID FIND HAYKAL'S ATTACK ON EVE SADAT DEPARTURE IN APPALLING TASTE. PRESUMABLY SADAT WOULD BE LEERY OF FOCUSSING FURTHER ATTENTION ON HAYKAL AND HIS SILVER TONGUE. A PUBLIC TRAIL, FOR EXAMPLE, WOULD PROVIDE HAYKAL WITH LOCAL FORUM HE NOW LACKS AND COULD GENERATE HOSTILE INTERNATIONAL ASSESSMENTS OF STATUS SADAT'S POLITICAL LIBERALIZATION POLICY, A POLICY WHICH WE JUDGE GENUINE, BUT WHICH CURRENTLY STALLED AS RESULT JAN RIOTS.
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